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ABSTRACT

The emphasis of this paper is that American Indian tribal history and literature should be in context with major developments that are taking place nationally. Such movements as urbanism, self-determination, cultural pluralism, tribalism and institutional relationships each have special meaning in the affairs of the Indian communities. It is difficult to predict what the major significance will be of these movements. As Indian communities undergo complex changes (while maintaining a fundamental continuity of culture) in response to the vast array of forces, it becomes more apparent that the Indian community may hold the only expertise for designing an education system that maintains its cultural integrity. The project offers the Indian people the opportunity to organize (including selection and interpretation) materials and other resources they alone possess. (FF)

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CONCEPTS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF TRIBAL HISTORY/LITERATURE PROJECTS

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To appreciate the full significance of the tribal history/literature projects, one should consider them in context with major developments that are taking place nationally. Such movements and developments as urbanism, self-determination, cultural pluralism, tribalism and institutional relationships have special meaning in the affairs of the Nation's Indian communities.

Urbanism at this time is of a character that many Indian communities, especially those found on reservations, have never experienced before. The new urbanism is one in which for the first time actual cities are emerging in the midst of traditional community settings. Zuni, under the leadership of Governor Robert Lewis, has established a pattern for others to consider in understanding how modern community development can be achieved by using the foundation of tradition thousands of years old. For the Navajo people, their Tribal Chairman, Peter MacDonald, has announced the inauguration of a new Navajo Nation. A new capital for that nation will be centered in a reservation as large as the New England states area. His remarks alluding to this development indicated that the new Navajo state would reflect in all its aspects the character of Navajo culture. Countless other examples can be cited for what might be termed emerging new states and on-reservation urbanism. Such developments have importance for the role of these communities in the social, economic, political and cultural systems of adjacent states and regions.

Indian society in the United States is experiencing its own kind of cultural pluralism. The previous portrayal of Indian cultural character as basically an urban-reservation dichotomy no longer serves to explain a highly complex social-cultural character for the Indian people. Among the urban organizations,

there are over 50 in the Los Angeles area alone. National organizations range from the National Congress of American Indians to the National Tribal Chairmen's Association. Other groups such as the National Indian Youth Council, American Indian Movement, university student Indian organizations represent the younger often more activist elements among native American Indians. Professional groups are represented by such organizations as the National Indian Education Association, National Indian Physician's Association, National Indian Women's Association, and many others. The range and character of Indian groups form a many-dimensional and intricate system of a cultural pluralism in the Indian community.

Changes in the social, political and economic environment have been dramatic and equally rapid for the Indian people. One study indicated that about 1935, most tribal councils dealt with "external" agencies through a tribal lawyer, or the agency superintendent (Levine, 1970: 270ff.). These interim agents with the tribal council or other representatives normally pursued various community concerns at the national level through the Bureau of Indian Affairs or occasionally with the members of congress. Today, the tribal council and their chief tribal officers maintain daily contact with literally dozens of federal agencies including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of Health, Education and Welfare (all of its subunits), Departments of Labor, Commerce, National Institutes of Health, Public Health Service, ad infinitum. Locally, the Indian community is in contact with state departments of education, local agencies of the federal government, other tribal groups, universities and private groups of all types. Tribal authorities are in continuous legal involvements with public and private

parties. In addition the tribal officials are often ceremonial leaders responsible for the welfare of their community. The tribal leader must display a constantly and almost limitless competence in economic, education, political, traditional life, and other areas of leadership for his community. In their hands these leaders hold the destiny of communities whose environment of change is rapid and awesome. In this environment, tradition and the integrity of cultural continuity must be protected and nurtured: a formidable task indeed.

The examples of forces and movements of change are only a small sampling of events in the environment of Indian communities today. For the time being it is difficult to predict what the major significance will be of these movements. However, at the immediate local community level there is much to be learned in evaluation of these events and developments. Alvin Toffler, in Future Shock, observed in his chapter "Education in the Future Tense" that increasing reliance on, or recognition of, the expertise in a community would have to be made by formal institutions of instruction. Toffler cited communities such as Los Alamos, San Diego and other communities which have parental groups often more knowledgeable in certain subjects than teachers in the local school systems. At this time as the Indian communities undergo complex changes (yet maintain fundamental continuity of culture) in response to the vast array of forces, it becomes more apparent that the Indian community may hold the only expertise for designing an education system that maintains the cultural integrity of that community. In the community also rests the resources by which principles of cultural adaptability and flexibility can be used to meet social challenges in an age of massive techno-

logical development. It is imperative that the resources be utilized in educational planning.

The tribal history/literature projects, therefore, involve more than publication of materials. The most significant aspect of these projects lies in the development of a process and procedure by which the knowledge and experience of the community can be brought to bear on institutions and issues of education as it pertains to special needs for Indian people. Further, through this process a systematic way is suggested by which the Indian community can evaluate the factors or elements of tradition that have provided them the useful alternatives for cultural viability. For groups in the Southwest, one must remember they have been in contact with many outside influences: native groups before European contact, after contact the European agents included explorer, soldier, priest, government administrator. From contact to the present day, the Indian people have dealt with a range of religious, economic and political agents that stagger the imagination when one considers the shifts and forces of influence that were employed to change the Indian way of life. Consider, as an example, the fact that Pueblo and other Southwestern Indians have dealt with Roman and aspects of Islamic Law through Spain and her institutions, a variety of transitional law systems during the shift from Mexican hegemony to territorial, then full state aegis under the United States, finally resulting in the brand of English common law that has emerged under the agencies of the United States. Through all however, there has been the persistence of Indian law-ways and other systems of tradition.

Without some understanding of the force of tradition and patterns of social, economic and religious development among precontact civilizations, we are

unable to grasp the significance of current issues such as nativistic, social and political movements; or seeming contradictions of values. As an example, testimony among the Pueblos of New Mexico regarding the Civil Rights legislation (Title IV, 1968) seemed to indicate resistence to the extension of civil rights to the Pueblos, but on further inspection, we find that it is not resistence so much, as the explanation that two systems of justice and due process are under question. As the All Pueblo Council Chairman, Domingo Montoya, stated at Congressional Hearings in 1968:

> Admittedly we Pueblos differ from our American neighbors in many ways, especially in our system of government and related features of our internal tribal life. But despotism, injustice, and mistreatment are not among the elements that distinguish us from our neighbors and fellow citizens.
>
> We do not object to the principles set forth in S. 1843 because these same principles are part and parcel of our own traditional concepts of justice and our way of life; the procedures required by the proposed legislation are, however, highly objectionable to us because they tend to eliminate our traditional ways of attaining the basic objectives of justice and equality. Not only would the proposed innovations destroy our own judicial system, but they threaten the whole structure of our Pueblo governments since all of its functions are interlinked. ("Rights of Members of Indian Tribes", Hearing before the Subcommittee on Indian Affairs, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, 90th Congress, Second Session, on H.R. 15419 and Related Bills, March 29, 1968, GPO, Washington, D. C., 1968. p. 36ff). [emphasis added].

The core of the testimony concerned the survival of a traditional, quasi-theocratic governmental system to which alien juridical processes and legal philosophy could be destructive to the very heart of the Pueblo culture. Authors not versed in the ethnography and social dynamics of Pueblo culture may misunderstand the gravity of implications of such civil rights legislation on the very fundamental basis of Pueblo Law Ways. One should refer

to Llewelyn and Hoebel, The Cheyenne Way, to understand another legal system among Indians. The tribal projects provide important insight into the analysis of conflict between disparate systems and the manner that personal life is affected. These studies also provide understanding of the viability and vitality of indigenous institutions.

The foregoing discussion demonstrates that only through the assistance of Indian communities and those who can articulate the history and cultural process of the community can we begin to comprehend the particular concerns of the Indian people.

The projects offer the Indian people the opportunity to organize (including selection and interpretation) materials and other resources they alone possess. Through coordination and cooperation with the agencies selected by the tribe from outside technical resources such as universities, the tribal materials and expertise is blended with such resources and techniques of ethnohistorical research and writing. The combination is a representative step toward affecting new perspectives of history and culture study. The result is or can be a major breakthrough in bringing new insights to educational agencies for the interpretation of materials, concepts for curriculum design, and in techniques of teacher training; revisions applicable to all levels of education. For the Indian community it is an opportunity to extend to a greater audience the wisdom and expertise that has always existed in the community. The resource is then brought into contact with the agencies that have traditionally defined the nature of education and educational institutions affecting the Indian child. Historians, anthropologists, classroom teachers, administrators, state

departments of education officials, as well as some state legislatures, have been involved in these materials through presentations by the tribal representatives. From such contacts the states can begin to realize that in their communities exists a resource of training and materials development talent that can be successfully combined with the technical expertise of local school teachers, administrators, university personnel, and others. In short, these projects are a model of the type of totally involved and inter-related community-educational agencies effort. The evaluations of the project rest with the Indian community. That evaluation comes from reconsidering the manner in which future materials might be improved for greater effectiveness or more accuracy. For example, the Zuni book is now being considered for translation into the native language. At this stage, there is a good possibility that we can demonstrate that an effective Indian language literacy program can be developed so that Indian students and their non-Indian classmates can learn to read, write and speak the native language. (See William Townsend, They Spoke a Common Language, for a discussion of the manner in which this type of language program can be developed.)

For the Indian community the tribal history/literature project process involves review of the materials that have been written previously. By means of scholarly and other sources, Indian culture was defined in various ways, sometimes not accurate; in most instances the Indian person and his community have emerged too often as static and passive elements in society. His role in history and the reality of his continuity from a past time to the present was vague at best, often completely lost. Through review of the past statements about themselves, and becoming involved in the writing and evaluation

process, Indian people today are better able to understand the tenants of historical research and writing techniques of historians or others. Through this understanding, there can be better appreciation of the manner in which history and anthropology will have to be dealt with in writing future, more representative materials. That appreciation suggests strongly that Indian historians, from each tribal group, versed in the language and knowledgeable about the manner in which history is perceived will have to come forth.

For the professionals in history, anthropology and education, these projects can provide insight into the effects that past studies might and often do have in determining the course of a community and its people. The discussion continues among professional historians on the merit of these projects. Questions of the validity or use of oral history or if these are "authorized" histories, have been raised. In either case, we should remember that western civilization's grandest records began with oral history: the Illiad, Odessey, and Old Testament attest to this fact. Authorized history is another question, since to now one might consider previous history written by outside parties about Indian people as unauthorized. The dialogue between historian anthropologist and tribal authorities that can ensue from these publications should be seen in terms of attempts to provide better understanding of the phenomenon of cultural contact and what that ultimately means to the individual and his way of life. From such understanding we can be greatly enriched as human beings and as a truly pluralistic society in which there can be respect for another man's right to express his culture.

One source has commented on the current issues and dilemma:

As a consequence of [the] accelerating rate of change, two successive generations today differ more in experience and world view than did a hundred successive generations of the past. The accumulative character of technological progress and its increasing momentum make it probable that the next few decades of this century will bring even more rapid and radical transformation. By traveling this path, man, who won the battle for survival in competition with other species and who developed a culture that permitted the subjugation of nature for human benefit. . . [is] confronted with the challenge of bending culture to his needs. If he is successful, culture, the creator, and man, the created, will become blended; man will be molded by the human conscience. The result will permit man to influence his own biological, social, cultural, and psychological reproduction, and to shape himself by his own plan (Ribeiro, 1968: 149).

In Zuni prophesy one reads:

After many generations, our time has come to lead our people. We must teach our children what our ancient ones taught our fathers. The predictions they made to their children and their children's children on down the line to us. As you can observe, all the predictions are coming true.

Our Creator, the Supernaturals, knew the future of the lives for the generations to come. Our fathers used to tell us that we are coming to the end of the destinations of our lives. When we reach the end, we will fall off and then our children will talk the language of no-men, making little sense.

From the East, there will come a road made of steel, they used to say, referring to the railroads, long before they came. Did it not come true?

This road will stretch out its arms towards the setting sun and the population will increase until it explodes. The people, from the rising sun, will bear children and they will mature without children. Maybe your generation or in your children's generation, it will happen. You might live to observe the disasters of the end of the world.

The day will come when your children will drink the dark liquid and fight in the same household. There will be fights against brothers, father against sons, nephew against uncle and so on. You will be treated as a stranger in your own family.

(Permission granted by Governor Robert Lewis, Zuni Pueblo, for use of these passages which appear in the text of the second volume of Zuni oral traditions soon to be published by the Zuni people).

All these remarks point out one essential fact. The search for Indian, Eskimo, Native values and understanding of cultural systems is only the beginning. The final value of these searches and understandings comes in applying them in a vastly new, fast changing present and unclear future. What makes values and institutions survive over thousands of years? Are these factors flexible, durable enough to support personal and collective lifeways in a future society made up of many groups living in ever closer limits? Perhaps an answer, at least an approach to understanding, can emerge from the tribal project processes which recognize the values that have been so enduring to Indian life. Out of the process also emerge the application techniques that recognize the special resources of the Indian community.

(Other projects similar to the Zuni, Southern Ute and Nez Perce programs are in operation or planned by the following tribes: Couer D'Alene, Yakima, Cheyenne-Arapaho, Navajo and Intertribal Council of Nevada).

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